

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-09 ISO-00 IO-03 PM-03 NSC-07 SP-02 SS-14

RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 PRS-01 DODE-00 DRC-01

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R 061000Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4124

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T SANAA 2093

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJECT: DEPARTURE OF PRIME MINISTER AL-AYNI

1. PRIMIN MUSHIN AL-AYNI DEPARTED SANAA OCT 4 FOR PARIS ON VERY SHORT NOTICE. OFFICIAL REASON GIVEN WAS NEED FOR MEDICAL TESTS FOR SPINAL COMPLICATIONS RESULTING FROM SEPTEMBER 17 HELICOPTER CRASH. AYNi WAS SEEN OFF AT AIRPORT BY EX-CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT SHAIKH ABDALLAH AL-AHMAR AND HODEIDA GOVERNOR SHAIKH SINAN ABU LUHUM (AYNI'S BROTHER-IN-LAW), BUT NOT BY PRESIDENT HAMDl.

2. SUDDEN DEPARTURE OF AYNi HAS CAUSED INTENSE LOCAL SPECULATION THAT POLITICAL PROBLEMS ARE REAL REASON FOR TRIP. FOR EXAMPLE, NEWS REACHED ME IN TAIz EVENING OCT 3 DURING PARTY GIVEN BY TAIz EMBOFF BRUNER. TAIz GOVERNOR ABD AL-RAHMAN

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MUHAMMAD ALI UTHMAN, WHO IS NEUTRAL TOWARDS AYNi-ABU LUHUM

FACTION, IMMEDIATELY COMMENTED TO ME THAT AYNi "MIGHT NOT RETURN." THIS COMMENT, HOWEVER, WAS APPARENTLY BASED ON SPECULATION NOT INFORMATION.

3. SPECULATION, AS YET UNCONFIRMED, IS THAT RUNNING DISPUTE BETWEEN AYNi AND SHAIKH ABDALLAH OVER FORM OF NEW GOVERNMENT LED TO FORMER'S DEPARTURE AS MEASURE OF PROTEST. WE DO HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT YARG LEADERSHIP HAS REACHED POLITICAL DECISION TO RECONVENE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY (WITH SHAIKH ABDALLAH RESTORED AS ITS HEAD) AFTER MID-OCTOBER ID AL-FITR HOLIDAYS. AYNi'S OPPOSITION TO THIS DEVELOPMENT IS WELL KNOWN. THERE IS, MOREOVER, CONTINUING DISPUTE OVER FORM OF NEW EXECUTIVE, PRESENT ODDS FAVORING HAMDi AS PRESIDENT AND EX-PRIMIN ABDALLAH AL-HAJRI AND TAIZ GOVERNOR UTHMAN AS TWIN VICE-PRESIDENTS. THIS WOULD BE COLLEGIATE EXECUTIVE VARIATION ON REPUBLICAN COUNCIL WHICH AYNi HAS LONG PUBLICLY OPPOSED. HAJRI IS PRO-SAUDI POLITICAL ENEMY OF AYNi.

4. SUDDENNESS OF DEPARTURE IS UNDERLINED BY FACT THAT DEP PRIMIN MAKKI IS LEAVING OCT 6 TO HEAD YARG DELEGATION TO UNGA AND THAT NO ACTING PRIMIN HAS YET BEEN NAMED.

5. COMMENT: THERE MAY WELL BE SOME SUBSTANCE TO SPECULATION THAT PRIMIN DEPARTING AS GESTURE OF POLITICAL PROTEST, ALTHOUGH YEMENIS HAVE GREAT AFFINITY OF MACHIAVELLIAN EXPLANATIONS. HOWEVER, I WOULD PREFER TO SUSPEND JUDGEMENT FOR NEXT DAY OR TWO UNTIL WE HAVE HAD CHANCE TO TALK TO PEOPLE OF VARYING POLITICAL PERSUASIONS.
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